**DAY ONE**

**The First Sunrise**

**(no audio)**

Long, long ago in the Dreamtime the earth was dark. There was no light. It was very cold and very black. Huge grey clouds kept the light and the warmth out and were so low that the animals had to crawl around. The Emu hobbled neck bent almost to the ground; the Kangaroo couldn't hop, and none of the birds could fly higher than several feet in the air. Only the Snakes were happy because they lived close to the ground.

The animals lived by crawling around the damp dark earth, feeling for fruits and berries. Often it was so hard to find food that several days would pass between meals. The Wombat became so tired of people bumping into him that he dug himself a burrow, and learned to sleep for long periods.

Eventually, the birds decided they'd had enough. They called a meeting of all the animals. The Magpies decided that they would raise the sky by gathering sticks and pushing the sky up. All the animals agreed it was a good idea, and they set about gathering sticks. The Magpies took a big stick each, and began to push at the sky.

The Emus, the Kangaroos and the Wombats watched as the Magpies pushed the sky slowly upwards. They used the sticks as levers, first resting the sky on low boulders, then on small hills. As the animals watched, the Magpies, pushing and straining, reached the top of a small mountain.

It was still very dark, but at least the Emu could straighten up, and the Kangaroo was able to move in long proud hops. The Magpies kept pushing the sky higher and higher, until they reached the highest mountain in the whole land. Then with a mighty heave, they gave the sky one last push! The sky shot up into the air, and as it rose it split open and a huge flood of warmth and light poured through on to the land below. The whole sky was filled with beautiful reds and yellows. It was the first sunrise.

Overjoyed with the beauty, the light and the warmth, the Magpies burst into song. As their loud warbling carried across the land, the Sun-Woman rose slowly, and began her journey towards the west. Now, each morning when the Sun-Woman wakes in the east she lights a fire to prepare the torch that she will carry across the sky each day. It is this fire that provides the first light of dawn. Then she takes up her torch, and begins her daily journey across the sky. When she reaches the western edge of the world, she extinguishes her flaming bark torch. Then she sits down, and repaints herself in brilliant reds and yellows, ready for her journey through a long underground passage back to her camp in the east. So that is why, to this day, every morning when the Sun-Woman wakes and lights her early morning fire, all the magpies greet her with their beautiful song.

**DAY TWO**

**Bald Boy and the Magic Seal**

[*http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/Bald-Boy-and-the-Magic-Seal---English.mp3*](http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/Bald-Boy-and-the-Magic-Seal---English.mp3)

One day, Bald Boy was walking back from the marketplace after selling his crops to the people of the neighboring village. He had made three gold coins that day and was very pleased with himself because now his mother would be able to buy food and clothing to last through the long winter.



Suddenly Bald Boy came across a group of men who were teasing a cat with a long stick. The cat looked very scared and was unable to escape. Bald Boy walked up to the men and said in a kindly voice: ‘Please stop teasing that poor cat. If you stop, I will give you a gold coin.’

The men agreed to put down the stick and Bald Boy handed over a shiny gold coin. The cat was very grateful to the boy and walked by his side. He promised that if ever he was able to repay the boy’s kindness, he would surely jump at the chance. Bald Boy could not imagine how a cat might help him in his life, but he agreed that the cat could join him, and so the two friends continued on their journey back to the boy’s home in the neighboring village.

The boy and the cat walked for a few miles until they came across an old man and an old woman who were beating a dog because it had been barking too loudly. Bald Boy approached the old couple and said in a kindly voice: ‘Please stop beating that poor dog. If you stop, I will give you a gold coin.’

The old couple stopped beating the dog and took the gold coin from the boy. The dog was very grateful to the boy for saving him from the old couple, and he asked to join the boy and promised that he would always be faithful and help whenever he could. The young boy could not imagine how a dog might help him in his life, but he agreed that the dog could join him, and so the three friends continued on their journey home.

Not long after this, Bald Boy and his new companions stumbled upon two woodcutters in the forest who were trying to kill a snake with their sharp axe. Bald Boy walked up to the angry woodcutters and said in a kindly voice: ‘Please do not kill that snake with your axe. If you leave the snake in peace, I will give you a gold coin.’

The woodcutters thought about Bald Boy’s proposition for a moment and then agreed to put down the axe. The boy handed over his last gold coin without thinking because he was happy to have saved the snake from certain death.

The snake was very grateful and slithered up to whisper in the boy’s ear.

‘Thank you, Son of Adam, for saving my life. I am the son of the Snake Emperor and you must come home with me so that my father might thank you in person for your kindness.’

Even though Bald Boy had no more gold coins to buy food, he was happy to have saved his three friends and agreed to go and see the Snake Emperor before returning home to his mother.

When they arrived in the forest, the Snake Emperor was very grateful to Bald Boy for saving his son’s life.

‘I will give you anything that you ask of me,’ said the Snake Emperor to the boy.

It was then that the young snake whispered in the boy’s ear once more.

‘Ask my father for his magic seal which he keeps under his tongue. With this seal all of your wishes will come true. All you have to do is ask and it will be given.’

And so the boy asked the Snake Emperor for his magic seal, and the Snake Emperor replied: ‘You ask me for my most precious possession, but you saved my son’s life and I will grant you what you ask.’

The Snake Emperor relinquished his magic seal and Bald Boy stuffed the seal into his pocket and returned home with his faithful cat and faithful dog by his side.

When Bald Boy’s mother learned that her son had given away all of their gold coins she was very angry, but the boy promised that he would make up for this loss by marrying the Emperor’s daughter and making a new life for his mother.

‘And how will you do that, my son? This cat and this dog will not help you do such a thing.’

It was then that Bald Boy told his mother all about the magic seal that would grant his every wish.

The very next day, Bald Boy set off with his faithful cat and dog to the palace to ask for the hand of the Emperor’s daughter.

‘I cannot allow my daughter to marry such a poor boy,’ said the Emperor when Bald Boy asked to marry the beautiful princess. ‘If you wish to marry my daughter you must first build a palace next to mine so that I know she will be well looked after. But I know that you will not build such a palace with the help of a cat and a dog.’

That night, Bald Boy held the seal under his tongue and wished that he had a palace of his own. Suddenly there was a blinding light in the night sky. And when the light faded, there at the edge of the forest stood a magnificent palace gleaming beneath the light of the full moon! The most magnificent palace the boy had ever seen. And it was his!

When the Emperor saw that the young boy had indeed built a beautiful palace, he agreed to the marriage at once. And so it was that Bald Boy and the Princess were wed that very same day.

The mother moved in with her son and daughter and lived like a queen in her new home. And the cat and the dog were also very happy in their new life.

The months passed and Bald Boy wished for nothing else as he was so happy with his new wife whom he loved very much. And so he placed the magic seal in a room all of its own and never told the Princess of its magical powers.

But one day, when Bald Boy was out at the marketplace, a crafty old bead seller knocked on the door of the palace and enticed the beautiful Princess to buy some of his beads.

‘They are very fine beads, my Princess, and you would do well to buy them from me.’

‘But I have no coins with which to buy them,’ the Princess replied.

The crafty old bead seller said that he would be willing to trade his wares for something within the palace. ‘I hear that you have a dusty old seal which you keep in a room in the palace; surely that is no use to you. I will take the seal in exchange for all of my beads.’

Because she did not know any better, the Princess handed over the magic seal to the crafty old bead seller who quickly disappeared across the lake towards his home in the dark forest somewhere on the other side.

As soon as the seal was gone, the palace disappeared into thin air and the Princess and the mother were left standing in the cold.

When the Emperor saw that the palace had disappeared, he reclaimed his daughter and promised that she would not be with her new husband if he could not look after her.

When Bald Boy returned home that day he was very sad to find his mother alone, his palace vanished, and his beautiful wife returned to her father. He did not know how to find the magic seal and was sure that his new life was over forever.

The cat stepped up to the boy and said to him: ‘I can find the seal but I cannot swim across the lake.’

Then the dog stepped forward and said to the cat: ‘I can swim across the lake with you on my back and together we will find the magic seal.’

And so the faithful cat and the faithful dog set off on their journey to recapture the magic seal from the crafty bead seller.

When they reached the river, the cat climbed up onto the dog’s back and the dog swam across to the opposite bank. Once they were across, the cat began sniffing at the air and followed the scent of the bead seller through the forest with the dog close behind.

It did not take long to find the cottage where the bead seller lived, and they could see through the window that the old man was fast asleep in his chair before the fire.

‘I will catch us a mouse,’ said the cat, ‘while you find us some peppercorns to grind up with your strong paws.’

And so the cat caught a little mouse and told it to sneak into the cottage and take the seal from under the tongue of the crafty bead seller. The dog sprinkled the ground peppercorns onto the mouse’s tail and the little mouse scurried into the cottage and climbed up the bead seller’s leg as he slept soundly by the fire.

When the mouse wiggled his tail, the peppercorn dust went straight up the old man’s nose and caused him to sneeze. It was then that the magic seal flew out into the air and the mouse caught it in his tiny paws!

The little mouse ran from the cottage and returned the magic seal to the cat and the dog who quickly made their way back through the forest towards the river.

Once again the cat climbed up onto the dog’s back and the brave dog swam across the great river.

And so the faithful cat and the faithful dog returned the seal to their master and the palace reappeared in a blinding flash of light.

Upon seeing the palace returned, the Emperor agreed that his daughter might once more live with Bald Boy. After all, the Emperor could tell that his daughter was very much in love.

Bald Boy decided to throw a huge party to celebrate the return of his beautiful wife. The whole village was invited and so began a feast that lasted for forty days and forty nights.

The mother and the Emperor agreed that there was indeed much that a cat and a dog could do if they were faithful to their master.

Bald Boy smiled because he had learned that friends always help each other when they can, and there is magic in such friendship. Perhaps even more so than in the magic seal.

**DAY THREE**

**The Song of the Armadillo**

<http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/armadillo.mp3>

Once there was an armadillo who lived in the Anaga rainforest. He loved music more than anything else in the world and all he wanted to do was to be able to sing like many of the other animals could.

He sat by the pond and listened to the frogs calling to each other.

‘I wish I could sing as low as you can. Can you teach me to sing please?’ he asked them.

But the frogs just laughed at him and said ‘Don’t be silly – armadillos can’t sing!’

He sat under the trees and listened to the crickets chirruping to each other.

‘I wish I could sing as high you do’ he said to them. Can you please teach me?’

But the crickets laughed at him as well and said ‘Don’t be silly – armadillos can’t sing!’

So the poor armadillo left the pond and walked slowly back to the edge of the town.

Now the music that the armadillo loved the best was the song of the beautiful birds – hummingbirds, martins and parrots. He could hear them singing all day long high up in the trees and yearned to be able to sing as beautifully as they could.

Suddenly he heard the beautiful song of some canaries in a cage being taken to the local market by a young man. The armadillo stood spellbound as he listened to the beautiful music. He pleaded with the canaries to teach him how to sing as beautifully as they could. The canaries laughed just like the crickets and the frogs and mocked the poor armadillo.

‘Don’t be so silly – everyone knows that armadillos can’t sing and there is no point in you even trying to learn!’ they said to him scornfully.

So the poor armadillo turned away, so sad that he was nearly in tears.

Now the man carrying the cage was a famous musician and he realized that the armadillo would never be happy until he was able to make the same beautiful music that he heard all around him every day in the rainforest. So he said to the armadillo kindly ‘I might be able to help you, but you will have to wait a long time’

The armadillo was so excited that he rushed over to the man and said ‘I really don’t care how long I have to wait – all I want in life is to be able to make beautiful music’

The musician said to the armadillo ‘But in order to help you make the beautiful music that you love so much, you will have to wait until you die and you are such a beautiful creature that I really wouldn’t want that to happen to you too soon’

But the armadillo was so amazed that the musician would be able to help him achieve his ambition, that even the thought of death could not stop him wanting the man to help him in any way that he could.

They spent many hours talking and the armadillo agreed that he would continue to enjoy listening to the music of the other animals until he became very old and then he would return to the musician’s house so that he could learn how he might be able to make beautiful music himself after his death.

After living a long and happy life in the forest, the armadillo realized that he was close to death and returned to the town. The musician made him welcome and explained that after the armadillo died, he would make a wonderful stringed instrument from his shell and travel all through the land playing music to all the people and animals. This made the armadillo very happy and he died with a smile on his face at the thought of how he would at long last achieve his greatest wish.

So the musician did as he had promised and made a beautiful harp from the shell of the armadillo and he travelled all over the land playing sweet music in memory of the armadillo.

Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the pond where the frogs lived, and they would stare at him with big eyes and say: "Listen! The armadillo has finally learned to sing."

Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the trees where the crickets lived, and they would creep outside to stare at him with big eyes and say: "Listen! The armadillo sings so beautifully."

And often the musician would visit the town where the canaries now lived in cages in the windows of all the houses and the little birds twittered to each other in amazement: "Listen! The armadillo makes the most beautiful music in the whole forest now."

And so it was. The armadillo had learned to sing at last, and his voice was the finest in the land.

**DAY FOUR**

**Love of the Forest**

[*http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/The\_Love\_of\_the\_Forest.mp3*](http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/The_Love_of_the_Forest.mp3)

The sun rises above the Amazon rainforest and the huge, evergreen trees allow rays of light to pass between their leaves and paint the forest floor in dappled shadows. In one of the taller trees, little monkey Dora is waking up. Dora is a pretty little monkey with brown hair and a long tail. She wishes that she could sleep some more, but there is no time to lose. Today is the day of the big party.

Monkeys will come from far and wide to attend the party, even from neighboring countries such as Peru and Bolivia. The big party, held in the Brazilian part of the Amazon Rainforest, is always a very big success. There is music and dancing, and often a monkey will find a mate and fall in love.

Dora is very excited because this year she has been asked to help the older monkeys of the community with the organizing of the party. This is a very great responsibility and there is no time to lose.

Dora arrives at the meeting early and is very pleased to see her friend Tinga. Tinga is an indigenous name meaning ‘of white colour’. This is the perfect name for Dora’s friend as he has white hair and green eyes. Tinga is a very rare and shy monkey, but when he sees Dora his eyes light up with joy.

The other monkeys often laugh at Tinga’s strange white hair and green eyes, but Dora does not like such jokes. She thinks that her friend is very handsome, even though her heart belongs to another monkey called Paco. Paco is a big, strong monkey with thick, black hair who lives in the forest on the very edge of Bolivia.

Dora first met Paco at the big party the previous year. They danced together only once but Dora knew then that her heart belonged to him. She also remembers that Paco was arrogant, and that he did not pay her very much attention. He had said that Dora was too young, and that she was always lost in her own fantasy world.

Despite all of this, Dora is looking forward to seeing Paco again, and such thoughts make her even more excited about the party.

Chief Ubirajara, a very big and very brave monkey, calls the meeting to order and begins to hand out tasks to the assembled monkeys. Eventually it is Dora’s turn to be given her special task for the day, but the little monkey is so lost in her own thoughts that she does not hear Chief Ubirajara’s instructions.

‘...Dora! Dora! Have you been listening to a word I have said to you? You are always lost in your fantasy world, even today when there is so much work to be done.’

Dora is startled and stammers her reply. ‘I... I am very sorry, Chief Ubirajara. Could you please repeat what it is you would like me to do today.’

Chief Ubirajara is a little impatient with young Dora but he understands that she is still young and that she is also very excited about the party.

‘You must find for us the most beautiful and delicious cupuaçu and açai berries and the finest Brazil nuts for our feast tonight.’

Chief Ubirajara claps his hands and smiles at the eager faces gathered in the forest clearing. ‘Now that everyone knows what to do, let’s get to work!’

And so the monkeys part company, each one determined to fulfil their task in preparation for the big party.

Dora very much likes the idea of being in charge of finding the food for the feast. She loves to explore the forest, jumping from branch to branch between the tall trees. She also loves to look at the beautiful plants and rich wildlife that fill her beloved forest.

‘I am the best person to chose for a job such as this,’ thinks Dora, as she sets off on her journey, determined to climb the tallest trees in order to find the most purple açais and sweetest cupuaçus.

After many hours of hard work, Dora’s bag is filled with a rich bounty of fruits and nuts. She thinks how proud Chief Ubirajara will be when he sees what a good job she has done. This thought makes the little monkey very happy as she hoists the bag onto her shoulders and heads for home.

When Dora is halfway home, her thoughts are interrupted by a strange sound in the forest. She looks all about her but does not see anything unusual. She tells herself to take extra care, but before long her thoughts drift again to the coming party and the dancing and celebrating that will be had by all. She thinks about how she will tidy her hair, and what she will say when she sees Paco.

‘I wonder if he will still think that I am too young. Even so, he will surely be impressed by the beautiful fruits and nuts I have gathered for the feast?’

Dora’s thoughts are interrupted again when she notices a rich, juicy cupuaçu on the forest floor in front of her. ‘How lucky to find a beautiful fruit such as this,’ she thinks, and runs to pick up the cupuaçu and add it to her bag.

But as soon as Dora’s hand reaches out towards the fruit, a huge net pulls tight around her body and hoist the little monkey up into the air.

Dora knows about such traps and is very scared. She cries out for help but the birds of the forest do not seem interested in her suffering. She struggles to free herself from the heavy netting but it is no use at all.

‘Help! Help me!’ cries Dora. But there are no animals around to help, and she is unable to wriggle free of the heavy netting by herself.

A great sadness descends upon Dora; her strength leaves her and she is unable to struggle any longer. She does not understand why humans set such traps to capture the monkeys of the forest. Her eyes fill with tears at the thought of being dragged away from her home, of never again jumping from branch to branch among the ancient trees, or of experiencing the great rain storms.

‘We do not do the humans any harm,’ she thinks. ‘We enjoy the forest and only wish to be free. I love this forest so much and I would not know how to live if I were taken away from all of this rich life, all the beautiful fruits that grow in the trees and the fresh water that runs in the river. How will I survive if they take me away from my friend Tinga?’

Dora hears a sound coming from the trees at the edge of the clearing. Human voices! They are coming towards her. ‘This is the end!’ she thinks. ‘I cannot escape.’

As the voices get closer and closer, Dora thinks about how much she loves her forest, how much she has *always* loved her forest.

Suddenly a wind whips up from the forest floor, a spinning whirlwind that heads straight for the humans. Dora can hear laughter in the air. Then a small boy appears out of nowhere. The boy has flaming red hair, he has very big ears, and his feet are pointing the wrong way, sticking out behind him as if twisted all the way around.

The whirlwind comes to a stop and Dora realizes that this is, in fact, another boy; this boy appears very dark, he has only one leg and wears upon his head a bright red hood. He has a pipe in his mouth and is smiling gaily as if having a wonderful time.

Dora cannot believe her eyes. ‘Is it really Curupira and Saci come to save me?’ she thinks. The little monkey had only heard of the two boys in stories told by her ancestors. Their existence belonged in legend and as such Dora was never sure if the legend was true.

At that moment a voice fills Dora’s ears. ‘When you love the forest, little one, the forest also loves you. This is the protection that I send to you to keep you safe.’

Now Dora is sure that what she sees is real, and she is filled with gratitude and love.

Saci begins to spin on his leg once more, creating a great whirlwind all about him. Curupira arms himself with an ugly face, and together the two head towards the humans making a terrible noise that would scare any grown man right down to his soul.

The humans run from the forest as fast as they can, never once looking back towards Curupira and Saci; and they promise all the time that they will never again enter the forest to set their traps.

When the humans have gone, Curupira and Saci free Dora from her net and make sure that she is not harmed in any way. The little monkey is so grateful that she offers her bag of fruits and nuts as a way of saying thank you to the brave boys of the forest.

Curipira takes the bag with gratitude. He smiles at Dora saying, ‘always take care of the forest and the forest will always protect you in return.’ With these words he walks from the clearing on his backwards feet and disappears among the tall trees. Saci then turns into a whirlwind once again and spins off in to the forest behind his friend.

Dora pauses for just a moment before running back in the direction of her home, eager to tell her magical story to the monkeys who are already dancing and celebrating at the big party.

When she arrives back home, Dora apologizes to Chief Ubirajara for not bringing her bag of fruit as instructed. She eagerly explains how Curipira and Saci saved her from being kidnapped by the humans and of how she offered the fruit as a thank you for their bravery. Chief Ubirajara nods patiently at young Dora and seems only grateful that she has returned safely.

Just then Paco steps out from the crowd that has gathered to hear Dora’s amazing story. ‘You are really a silly monkey, aren’t you!’ he says, in his proud voice. ‘Only a dreamer such as you could believe in the legend of Curupira and Saci.’

Dora realizes that Paco is actually a big fool. She tells herself that she will have nothing to do with him any longer. ‘He is too proud and arrogant and I have been foolish to feel anything for a monkey such as him,’ she thinks to herself.

Then little Dora spots her friend Tinga entering the party from the forest. She runs towards him with a smile.

Tinga is very happy to see that his friend is safe.

‘Where have you been, Dora? What happened?’

Dora tells Tinga all about her adventure in the forest. She tells about the humans and being caught in the net and meeting the two legends of the forest. Dora also realizes how much she cares for Tinga and remembers how it was him that she thought of the most when she was caught in the net, and how she felt so very sad at the thought of never seeing him again.

Tinga and Dora are very happy and reach out and hug one another.

‘I am so glad that you are safe, Dora.’

‘And I am glad to be with you again, Tinga,’ the little monkey says as she takes him by the hand and leads him onto the dance floor.

The party fills with music and laughter. The sun goes down and the stars fill the night sky above the ancient rain forest. Dora and Tinga dance together all night long, happy to be with one another, happy to be at the big party in the forest.

Out of the corner of her eye, Dora is sure she sees a whirlwind and a boy with flame red hair running between the trees in the forest. She is grateful to be surrounded by her friends and by the beautiful forest she calls home.

**Tips of pronunciation (if necessary)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| curupira |  | koo-roo-pee-rah |
| saci |  | sa-ci |
| cupuaçu |  | koo-pu-ah-sue |
| açai |  | a-sa-hee |
| Ubirajara |  | oo-bee-ra-ja-ra |
| tinga |  | chin-ga |
| paco |  | pα-co (α as in arm) |
| dora |  | do-rα |

**DAY FIVE**



**The Princess and the Golden Ball**

[*http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/The\_Princess\_and\_the\_Golden\_Ball.mp3*](http://www.worldstories.org.uk/audio/The_Princess_and_the_Golden_Ball.mp3)

Once there was a beautiful princess who lived with her father in a huge palace. Although the princess was very beautiful she was also very selfish and conceited. The princess always got her own way and the king was often disappointed with his daughter. He was worried that she would grow into a selfish woman and that she would not be a good example to his people.

One day the princess was playing in the gardens of the palace. She was playing with her favorite possession in the whole world, a golden ball. The princess loved the golden ball because it was so shiny and she could see her reflection upon its surface. She also loved the ball because it was so valuable.

The princess threw the ball high into the air where the sun made it sparkle against the blue sky. Higher and higher she threw the golden ball. So high that she imagined the golden ball was a second sun; a sun belonging to her and her alone.

The golden ball went so high up into the air that it really did begin to look like a sun, and the reflections dazzled the princess who had to close her eyes. The ball landed some way away and began to roll towards the lake in the shadows of the giant Nakla trees.

The princess let out a cry and ran towards the golden ball with her arms outstretched. But she was too late. The ball rolled into the lake and sank beneath the surface out of sight. The princess collapsed onto the ground and began to cry. She cried to hard that her tears fell into the lake making a sound like raindrops. Little ripples stretched across the surface of the lake and still the princess cried and cried.

Then a small voice came out of nowhere. 'Why are you crying, princess?' The princess looked all around but she could not see a single person near the lake. Again the small voice asked, 'why are you crying, my princess?'

When she looked down she saw a small frog sitting on the edge of the lake with wide eyes and little webbed feet.

'I have lost my golden ball and now I will never get it back.'

'Where have you lost it, princess?' said the little frog. 'I can help you find it if it will stop your tears.'

The princess wiped her tears away. Perhaps this little frog can help me, she thought.

'It is at the bottom of the lake where I cannot reach.'

The little frog looked at the princess and smiled. 'I can fetch it for you, princess. I will dive to the bottom of the lake and I will bring back your golden ball for you.'

The princess was delighted by the news and also smiled, but before the frog jumped into the water her wanted the princess to make him a promise.

'I will promise you anything if you will bring me back my golden ball,' said the princess.

'I want you to take me with you back to the palace and be my friend. If you promise to do this then I will dive to the bottom of the lake and find your golden ball.'

The princess agreed right away and so the little frog jumped into the lake and swam all the way to the bottom where he took the golden ball in his mouth. The ball was very heavy and the little frog struggled to get back to the surface. Eventually he appeared on the edge of the lake and dropped the ball onto the grass at the princesses' feet.

The princess took the ball and held it to her chest and laughed with glee. Then she ran towards the palace, leaving the frog behind.

'Wait for me,' cried the little frog. 'You promised to take me with you!'

But the princess ignored the frog, forgetting all about her promise. All she could think about was how happy she was that she had her golden ball. And she knew it would be dinner time at the palace and she was hungry. The princess only ever thought about herself and the poor frog was left alone on the edge of the lake.

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=outside+golestan+palace&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAcQjRw&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftheforgottenplaces.wordpress.com%2F2014%2F11%2F05%2Firans-golestan-palace%2F&ei=1Se0VIugLMTmsASNoYKQCg&bvm=bv.83339334,d.cWc&psig=AFQjCNG0D_wu2gBBvatwjpxDuZnWr5zOXQ&ust=1421179194874670)

Later that evening the princess and the king were sitting down to dinner in the palace. The princess did not spare a thought for the frog, or for the promise she had made him.

Then there was a knock at the palace door. A moment later the frog hopped into the dining hall and jumped up on to the table next to the princess. The princess was horrified and cried out, 'go away you disgusting frog!' But the king silenced his daughter and asked the frog what he was doing inside the palace. The frog told the kind all about the promise the princess had made to him. The king was very angry with his daughter and commanded her to keep her promise to the frog.

'We must always do as we promise, daughter.'

'But he is just a frog and I am a princess,' she said, almost in tears once again.

'That does not matter. You must do as you said you would do.'

The king made the princess serve the frog a small plate of food which the little frog hungrily gobbled down.

The princess was angry at her father and even angrier at the frog. She thought it wrong that a frog should be inside the palace, eating at her table with the king. But the king paid no attention to his daughter's foul mood.

Eventually the princess had had enough of the little frog and stood to go to bed. She bid her father goodnight and made to leave, but the frog reminded the princess of her promise to stay with him and be his friend. The king agreed that the princess must take the little frog to bed with her so that he might sleep on her pillow.

'I will not do it!' exclaimed the princess. But the king insisted his daughter keep her promise.

Although she did not want to, the princess knew that she must do as her father instructed. She placed her hand on the table and the little frog jumped into her palm. Then she went up to her bedroom.

Once away from the king, the princess was very mean to the little frog. She threw him onto her bed and told him that he was an ugly creature, and that he was very impudent to assume he could sleep on the pillow of a princess.

She got ready for bed and pulled the covers up close around her, ignoring the little frog who was sitting on the edge of her pillow.

'Why do you hate me so?' asked the frog. I did as you asked and rescued your golden ball from the bottom of the lake. All I asked in return was for you to keep your promise to be my friend.'

The frog lowered his head and tears escaped from his sad, wide eyes as he began to cry. 'I have been living by the lake for many years and all I wanted was to have your company. It is not a good life to be all alone with nobody to talk to.'

The princess was very moved by the frog's tears and her heart began to soften. Although she was a princess, and she had everything a young woman might want, she was an only child with no brothers or sisters to play with. The princess had grown up alone in the palace and she often wished that she was able to share her time with others. Often she would hear the young children playing on the other side of the palace walls and she was envious of their laughter and games.

The princess and the frog talked into the night and soon the princess forgot altogether that he was a frog and thought of him in a kind way. She shared stories her father had told her as a baby, and the frog enjoyed listening very much.

Towards dawn both the frog and the princess were very tired. The princess realized that she was happy to have a friend to talk to, and she regretted being so mean to the little frog. Just as they were both about to fall asleep, the princess leaned forwards and kissed the frog on the lips.

Instantly there was a blinding flash of silver light. The princess closed her eyes in shock. When she opened them a handsome prince stood before her and the little frog had vanished altogether.

'You have set me free with your kindness, princess,' said the handsome prince. 'You kept your promise and you befriended me even though I was just a frog.'

The very next morning the prince asked the king for his daughter's hand in marriage. The king agreed at once and the young couple were wed in the palace grounds next to the lake, beneath the shadows of the Nakla trees.

From that day forwards the princess was a changed person. She knew how important it was to keep a promise, and she treated her people with kindness and respect no matter how rich or how poor they were.

**DAY SIX**

**Eavesdropper** 39.6281° N, 79.3200° W

### http://t0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSuGjM6XAXQNJWt9anYDScd4OAxYA8MxaBIwCidp2F39O8Rib7P:www.mikechiasson.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/cashcow.jpg

There is an old Accidental tale which claims that at midnight, on Christmas Eve, the cattle will kneel in the barn and speak with one another. Once an old man decided to test the tale by hiding in the barn at midnight to listen. So he climbed a rope to the window in the hayloft. He lay down on the rough gray boards, covered himself with hay and waited.

Around midnight, he saw all the cows in the barn kneel. At first he could not make out any words, but then, he heard the cow underneath his hiding place say to its neighbor: "I am afraid our poor old master will not live out the year."

"Oh dear," exclaimed her neighbor. "What a pity."

The old man was so frightened by the cow's words that he hurried over to the window, wanting to get away from the barn as fast as he could. He ran into his house Accidently slipped and hit his head. He woke up the next morning in the yard so scared that he left and never to return to Accident.

Since then, the people on Sale Barn Road have never eavesdropped on the cattle at midnight on Christmas Eve.